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ABSTRACT

This book addresses the need for counselor training materials which deal with the counseling needs of women of varying ethnic and racial backgrounds. It is designed for training in community agencies, women's centers, college and university counseling centers, and other programs addressing the needs of re-entry women, single women, and displaced homemakers. The role of critical events in individual development is discussed, and the benefits of the case study method as a learning tool are described. Strategies for using case studies in a group setting are outlined and a discussion guide is provided. Ten composite case studies are presented which were developed from two interview studies of perceived critical events in the lives of 150 Black, White, and Hispanic women. The cases contain quotations and other details taken from the interview material, and illustrate the range of issues and events reported by participants. The cases are written from a client's point of view and represent a variety of counseling situations dealing with marital and family problems, career issues, health concerns, and adjusting to change. (JAC)

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CASE STUDIES OF CRITICAL EVENTS

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Other materials being developed by the Center for Woman's Identity Studies, Chicago State University:

THE CRITICAL EVENTS INTERVIEW TRAINING MANUAL. A pre-decision making technique for counseling women. This new technique offers both client and counselor a unique approach to helping women in transition.

SOURCES OF GROWTH: A RESOURCEBOOK FOR COUNSELORS OF WOMEN. Describes and identifies variables associated with growthful critical events including independence, courage and self worth. Includes implications to inform the practice of counseling with women.

CRITICAL EVENTS SHAPING THE HISPANIC WOMAN'S IDENTITY. A companion study of Hispanic women of both Mexican-American and Puerto Rican descent. Includes presentation of critical events data and an analysis of the cultural forces affecting the identity of Hispanic women.

EN-ACT: BLACK WOMEN'S IDENTITY IN ACTION. A facilitator's manual for a personal growth workshop on historical, social and psychological forces affecting the contemporary identity of black women.

EXPERIENCING YOUR IDENTITY: DEVELOPMENTAL MATERIALS FOR ACADEMIC AND COMMUNITY SETTINGS. Provides learning materials through which high school students and young adults can experience issues relating to their own sense of identity. Contains topics for creative expression and activities for group participation.

Related material developed by the Center for Woman's Identity Studies and currently available from the Education Development Center, 55 Chapel Street, Newton, Massachusetts 02160:

CRITICAL EVENTS SHAPING WOMAN'S IDENTITY: A HANDBOOK FOR THE HELPING PROFESSIONS. Ideal for "helping professionals" -- those social workers, psychiatrists and counselors responsible for the delivery of mental health services to women. This resource handbook provides information about those critical events in women's lives that influence their identity in a time of rapid social change.

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PART I

CHAPTER ONE: OVERVIEW

WOMEN AND COUNSELING

During the past decade, a growing body of literature on issues related to the practice of counseling and therapy with women has been developed. The journals of the helping professions, their annual convention programs and even the mass media provide indications of the importance and prevalence of interest in such issues not only by helping professionals themselves, but also by the general public and in particular by the consumers of counseling services, namely women themselves.

In part, the emphasis for examining the quality of counseling practice with women came from the recognition that, as women turned to the helping professions in times of crisis and decision, those very professionals were often unable to provide the necessary support, insight, understanding and sensitivity required to facilitate the woman client's growth toward full personhood. Further, numerous studies consistently revealed prevalent practices and theoretical models conceptualizing women as less than complete human beings and incapable of substantial achievements and responsibilities outside the home and family. The attitudes, methods, theoretical approaches and treatment practices of the helping professions have reflected commonly held social, economic and political views of women.

To some degree, the limiting consequences of sex role stereotyping have been brought to the forefront in professional considerations of counseling women. No longer are helping professionals so likely to argue the merits of career versus family, but are more apt to focus on how these efforts may be combined as well as the nature of limitations and benefits for the woman herself, members of her

family, for communities and for society at large.

Even a cursory examination of the literature of the helping professions will reveal the scope of research, of program development and of particular approaches related to the practice of counseling women. Nevertheless, there remains a continuing need for training materials for use in all levels and types of training programs as well as in staff development programs for present members of the helping professions. Even greater is the need for training materials addressing the counseling needs of women of varying ethnic and racial backgrounds and for considerations of the issues of dual membership in society based on race or ethnicity and sex.

This book is an attempt to meet the need for such training materials. It has been designed for use in a wide variety of training situations including community agencies, women's centers, academic programs, mental health centers, college and university counseling centers and other special programs addressing the particular needs of re-entry women, displaced homemakers and single women.

MEANING OF CRITICAL EVENTS

The cases presented here depict critical events or turning points in the lives of contemporary women. Although the work of Erik Erikson (1968) failed to consider important sex differences in the identity formation process, nevertheless it provides a base for current understandings of the meaning of critical events.

In the life of every person there are particular critical events so powerful in nature, so pervasive

in scope, as to challenge existing assumptions about self, roles and relationships. Critical events provide the occasion for the redefinition of identity. Erikson (1968) referred to such events as turning points or critical moments when previously held notions about self are called into question. Something happens, something powerful enough to cause the person to ask, "who am I now?" There is the sense that "who I was before" is no longer adequate to meet the demands of the new situation.

Critical events disrupt the individual's sense of identity. It is precisely at these times that she is open to change, to new insights, awareness and self-understandings, to new experiences and actions, and to previously unimagined dimensions of self on the one hand, but equally vulnerable to fear, anxiety, depression, immobilization and rage on the other.

Critical events must produce some change in the original identity. These events can be maladaptive and lead to retreat or frustration, or they can be growthful and inaugurate a new sense of efficacy, a reaffirmation of self, and movement toward a higher level of personal integration and differentiation.

More often than not, women seeking counseling are in the midst of a critical life event. The client is frequently suffering considerable emotional pain, accompanied by confusion in the cognitive domain. The old, familiar ways of thinking about self and the world have been disrupted, and they no longer provide an adequate basis for decision and action.

New competencies often require the development of greater degrees of independence and assertiveness, qualities which most women have been socialized to

reject, if not fear. The helping profession's capacity to maximize the potential for the growthful resolution of critical events in women's lives will be enhanced by a greater understanding of the nature of those events.

CHAPTER TWO: DEVELOPMENT

The ten cases presented in this book were developed from interviews with 150 white, black and Hispanic women. The interviews were conducted as part of two studies of perceived critical events in the lives of adult women.

Using the Critical Events Interview (Avery, 1980), the participants were asked to identify and describe the important dimensions of the critical events in their lives. The findings from these studies, together with implications for counseling practice, may be found in Critical Events Shaping Women's Identity (Avery, 1980) and in Critical Events Shaping the Hispanic Woman's Identity (Avery, In Press).

The cases are designed to illustrate the range of issues and events reported by the participants in the critical events research. Although the cases are composites, the events described, the quotations used and other details are taken directly from the interview material.

Prior to the writing of the cases, the interview material was categorized to determine the important events and issues. The cases are structured to illustrate the more prominent events and issues, but also to include some very unique material. The women in these cases are not prototypes but rather examples of real, living persons. Furthermore, the cases are constructed to suggest several dimensions of the women's lives. The purpose here also is to approximate the real counseling situation where the helping professional encounters a total person, not simply a career choice, a mastectomy or a divorce.

After the cases were drafted, they were reviewed by practitioners in psychology and social work as well as by persons outside the helping professions but with wide knowledge of the dynamics of women's li-

ves today. This review procedure provided evaluations on issues such as clarity, believability, severity of presenting problem, amount of background information, use of quotations and level of practitioner skill required to facilitate the client's resolution of the problems and issues described in the cases. Further, reviewers were asked to rate the degree of knowledge and sensitivity to female developmental processes and to cultural differences required.

Review results indicated that the ten cases represent a variety of counseling situations calling for a range of skills from those of the trained paraprofessional to those of a seasoned and highly skilled practitioner. Service settings fortunate enough to employ staff of varying backgrounds and levels of training will find it interesting and useful to discuss these cases together. Comparing perceptions of the cases may facilitate the management of clients in situations where the woman may see several staff members during the course of her counseling experience.

Insofar as possible, the cases are written from the client's point of view, reflecting her view of herself, of her life and of the world. This means that although some of the woman's own interpretations, realizations and understandings are presented, other interpretations are left to those using this book.

Not all issues, problems and conflicts are completely drawn out in the cases. Ambiguity is deliberately built in because it reflects the doubts and uncertainties of the client herself, and also because it forces the user to make assumptions regarding the ambiguous material and information gaps just as would happen in the early hours of counseling. The women depicted in the cases are as complex as the real women upon whose lives they are based.

CHAPTER THREE: CASE ANALYSIS

LEARNING FROM CASES

The case study method has been one of the major learning tools of the helping professions. It is both powerful in impact and flexible in delivery. The learner is called upon to apply theory and technical knowledge to an individual situation.

Because the case is either real or designed to approximate reality, the learner must consider the individual in the larger social context in which she lives. Thus, the case study method is a particularly effective learning tool when the goal is toward increasing understandings of persons whose lives are especially influenced by social expectations, values and policies as are the lives of women and minorities.

One of the most important differences between traditional counseling approaches and more recent models which speak directly to the needs of women and minorities, involves viewing the client in a larger social context. For the most part, traditional approaches view the person in isolation and attribute problems to intra-personal conflicts regardless of the larger social context in which the client lives and has been reared.

Counseling approaches which will be most effective with women and minorities must transcend this client isolation and develop in the practitioner the ability to see the client in her social context. It is precisely because the case study method is able to present the individual in life context that it is so powerful a tool for both attitude change and skill development.

The case study brings together various areas of knowledge and forces the learner to apply them to

a practical situation. It calls not only for breadth of knowledge in the social and behavioral sciences, but also provides an indication of the learner's ability to translate that knowledge into action. Synthesis and integration of past learnings are demonstrated through the analysis of cases.

Further, the case study method allows the client and her needs to be conceptualized through a variety of theoretical lenses thus expanding the learner's range of potential treatment alternatives. Like other laboratory experiences, it provides a relatively safe opportunity for the learner to explore various approaches without the consequences of actually intervening in another person's life.

As a learning and teaching tool, the case study is expansionistic. It will lead to more questions, more wonderment, more puzzled looks, more furrowed brows. It is a method which causes the learner to pause, draw back and be awed by the complexities of the human condition.

On the other hand, a limitation of the case study method is the degree to which a case actually reflects general issues or problems which the learner will confront in the real work situation. Sometimes, the uniqueness of the client depicted in a case may be such that analysis of the case contributes little to overall counseling effectiveness and increased skills. These cases have been designed to avoid such limitations by being structured to illustrate the broad range of events and issues described in the critical events research.

GROUP METHODS

Depending upon the goals of training and the nature of the client population served, persons using this book may find it helpful to select those cases which illustrate issues particularly important to their women clients. The following list groups the cases according to the major issues illustrated:

1. Re-entry women: Dolores, Sara
2. Minority women: Adele, Clarice, Dolores, Juanita, Toni
3. Marital and family problems: Adele, Helen, Peggy
4. Career issues: Clarice, Naomi, Sara, Toni
5. Health concerns: Adele, Naomi, Peggy
6. Older women: Adele, Juanita, Barbara
7. Single women: Naomi, Sara, Toni

Although these cases may be studied by students and practitioners alone, they are probably most profitably used in a group setting such as a class, staff meeting or in-service training seminar. While many group leaders may have their own methods of case analysis, other strategies for using the cases are suggested here. In addition, a discussion guide is presented.

1. Brainstorming: Using the categories in the discussion guide, the group quickly lists items to be considered under each category. The group then prioritizes the items listed for each category and discusses their reasons for assigning more importance to one item over another.

2. Role playing: This may be done in several ways:

   - One person playing the client and another the counselor.

   - One person playing the client and rotating persons playing the counselor role.

   - One person playing the counselor role and rotating persons playing the client role.

   - In addition to the client herself, group members assume the roles of the various other persons in the woman's life as depicted in the case.

3. Category analysis groups: The total group is divided into sub-groups, each of which focuses upon one category from the discussion guide. The conclusions of the sub-groups are then compared and evaluated in total group discussion.

4. Theoretical perspective groups: The total group is divided into sub-groups, each analyzing the case from a different theoretical perspective such as client-centered, learning theory, psychoanalytic, feminist therapy and others.

DISCUSSION GUIDE

The following discussion guide and the categories it contains were developed on the basis of the responses of practicing counselors with extensive experience counseling women. When given cases for discussion without guidelines, these were the categories through which the practitioners considered the case. Therefore, these categories may be

considered an indication of the ways in which practicing counselors approach the analysis of a case.

1. Issues to Attend to During Counseling

   This category may be divided into immediate issues and long range issues. The issues may relate to the client's presenting problem, to developmental factors, to intrapersonal and interpersonal conflicts, to role conceptions and expectations, to the client's emotional state, lifestyle, support systems and her view of herself.

2. Areas for Further Exploration

   This category includes areas about which the counselor needs additional information or clarification. Some of the areas for further exploration may relate to issues listed above. In this category, it is important for the counselor to question his or her reasons for seeking additional information and to have some sense of the use of that information in the total counseling process.

3. Counseling Approaches

   This includes both immediate and long range counseling goals as well as theoretical approaches and the use of specific counseling techniques. Treatment and service alternatives such as group counseling or marriage counseling are also considered here.

4. Outside Resources and Referral

   The resolution of the client's present situation may be facilitated through the use of ser-

vices outside the counseling relationship itself. It is important to be specific about the ways in which such referrals will be integrated into the overall counseling plan for the client.

5. Cautions and Negative Interventions

   This includes counselor behaviors, attitudes, approaches and strategies which should be avoided with the particular client. These areas of caution may differ in the various stages of the counseling process.

RESOURCES

The learnings derived from the analysis of these cases will be expanded by the use of additional resource materials and resource persons. There is a growing body of materials on the counseling of women and on the dynamics of women's lives today. Some resource materials are listed at the end of this book. Additional materials may be obtained through the various professional associations.

In group training situations, the analysis of the cases will be enhanced by inviting resource persons to join the discussion. Persons with extensive experience in the counseling of women and/or with particular knowledge of the problems and choices faced by contemporary women will contribute new dimensions to the analysis of these cases.

Such resource persons may be found in colleges and universities in departments such as Women's Studies, Psychology and Sociology, and in centers for re-entry women, continuing education, counseling and career development. Other sources of resource

persons include mental health centers, community counseling centers and YWCA's as well as local programs and centers offering specific services to women.

PART II

THE CASES

ADELE

For some weeks Adele has been "suffering with nerves" and can't understand why she's "so jumpy." Tears come easily and she often feels anxious without being able to pinpoint specific reasons. She fears her job may be in jeopardy. The principal of the school where she has taught for years made comments recently about his concern that she is unable to handle her students and hinted that he may lower her excellent rating. In addition, Adele states that about a month ago, she definitely decided to divorce her husband of 31 years. She feels that she is tired of "being the provider of services and entertainment for her family." However, she feels terribly guilty about this decision because it would mean "breaking a promise made to God."

Adele is a 57 year old elementary school teacher. She is brown-skinned, not exceptionally dark, with a narrow nose and small lips. Adele's hair is short and needs to be straightened approximately every two weeks.

Adele reflects back to her youth when she "had a terrible inferiority complex. I felt that nobody liked me because I was dark." Adele and her father were the darkest members of her family; her mother was quite fair-skinned and it seemed to Adele that her family was constantly pointing out "how pretty my sister was and how dark and ugly I was." Adele's sister was two years younger and "looked like mother and had the good hair in the family." It wasn't until she began dating the man who later became her husband that she conceded to herself that "maybe she really didn't look so bad."

Adele wanted most to please her father. However, he "wasn't around much and when he was there, he

paid more attention to my sister than to me. I remember feeling very hurt and angry and left out." Adele always did well in school and felt this was one way to gain recognition. Nevertheless she states, "My school grades didn't seem to matter to him."

Adele describes her mother as being coldly unsympathetic and painfully recalls instances when she tried to "talk about personal things" and her mother didn't seem interested. Adele's maternal grandmother lived with them and was always pointing out how "I wouldn't get a husband because Black men only wanted to marry fair women. She said I should concentrate on my school work so that I would at least be assured of getting a job as a teacher." There were other early instances when she felt rejected and specifically cites one occasion during elementary school days when she won a prize for spelling and no one could come to the awards assembly. Adele recalls that when such instances would occur, she would usually try to do something extra nice to get attention. For example she would do all the house work. However, things had got to the point where everyone expected her to do most of the chores. When Adele could not find a way to "please them," she would "retreat into my shell and day dream." Often she would remain in her room and refuse to talk - especially to her sister. She remembers once at the age of twelve when she didn't talk to anyone for about a week. In addition to her younger sister, Adele had two older brothers who did occasionally join in teasing her about being dark.

At sixteen Adele joined a church and "found religion." For the first time in her life she became important because she could always be relied upon to be there. She was very active in all the church activities, often spending her entire Sunday at church. Adele's pastor held her up to the other teenagers as a "model child."

She graduated second in her high school class and decided to go to a state teacher's college. Her parents supported her in this decision but told her she would have to work or get a scholarship to support herself.

During her first year away from home at college, she met Don. He was rather quiet, thin and not really good looking, but he seemed to find her attractive. In order to please Don, she engaged in sexual relations with him and subsequently became pregnant. When she told him, he said that "I had been stupid and careless" and convinced her to have an abortion, which she did. Afterwards, she felt angry and resentful because she felt Don had let her down. There was no one to whom she could turn. Her pastor would not have understood and her family certainly would not have offered sympathy. She felt very alone. Additionally, she had already been feeling very guilty about going to bed with Don and the abortion only increased those feelings.

After the experience with Don, Adele stopped dating altogether and began to concentrate all the more on her studies. Once again she became involved in church activities. She attended the Black church in town and joined the choir. However, Adele's relations with her family remained cold and distant. She saw them on vacation breaks but no one ever seemed to have the time or inclination to visit her.

During her senior year, Adele's sister met and married a good looking intern. That marriage "pleased my family very much and reaffirmed their belief that my sister had what it takes to get a good man, while I didn't."

When her college graduation neared, Adele called and especially asked her father to attend the ceremony. He told her that he couldn't take the

time off from his work. But she remembers that, "He did take time off to go to my oldest brother's graduation from dental school a few months later."

Adele taught for a few years and during that period was introduced to Calvin by a fellow teacher. He was a deacon in his church and "rather righteous." She felt comfortable with him because he didn't place much emphasis on "worldly beauty." After 2 years of dating they decided the "sensible thing to do was to get married." She was 26 and "beginning to give up hope that I would ever get married." Adele's daughter was born soon and a year later, Sonny, who is now 22 years old. "Sonny lives at home and can't seem to get out and get a job." Now that Sonny is back home, he is following in his father's footsteps and Adele is expected to continue to cook and clean for both of them.

From the beginning of their marriage, Adele tried to get Calvin to help her around the house. He refused saying that was "woman's work." Between the births of her two children, Adele taught as a substitute and returned to full time teaching when Sonny was 4 years old. Calvin works as a salesman, which requires that he attend a number of office social functions. He expects Adele to accompany him to these events. However, whenever she has activities scheduled at her school, he can't seem to find the time to attend.

Although their sexual life over the years had been satisfactory, last year Calvin ceased asking for sexual relations. Adele suspects that he "may have a girl friend," but states emphatically, "I really don't care because that part of my life has finished and he needs to get his satisfaction somewhere." It was about then that Adele began to think seriously about getting a divorce and to notice that she was "starting to get jumpy and depressed."

BARBARA

"Philip died a year ago. I think I'm beginning to recover from it now. I found it hard to get myself moving in any direction. I was immobilized. There was more than enough money to keep me living comfortably. I finally figured out that with this new freedom I would have to plan for myself and I was terrified. First my life was spent being dependent on my family, then on Philip. I can't trust my ability to make decisions for myself. I don't know how."

Recalling the early years of her marriage, Barbara says, "I taught for 3 years and even I have to say that at the end, I really knew what I was doing in the classroom. Maybe it was because I liked my students and helping them to learn. I made some good friends at school, friends I kept in touch with for years after I left. You know though, now that I think about it, those friends never met Philip. He was always so busy with studies and work. We had so little time together and he said we had to make it count. So we spent most of our time with his clients or bosses."

Barbara is the oldest of two daughters. Her father owned a small business while her mother did volunteer work for various charities and maintained the household. Barbara remembers that when she came home from school, "Mom was always there, with a snack or something before I went out to play."

Barbara doesn't remember any difficult incidents during her growing years. Her mother and father got along well. There were few arguments. Her father was the "boss" and her mother the "interpreter." Barbara recalls, "Oh, maybe I was angry at my sister once in a while. However, I don't remember anything serious happening. Both of us just sort of drifted along our respective paths

in life. After elementary school came high school and following high school there was college. Looking back I suppose I always took the safest route."

Barbara remembers receiving some explicit messages from parents and other adults, but particularly from her mother. "Somehow I knew that when I fell in love, it should be with someone who was more intelligent. I also knew that the 'right' thing to do was to go to college, marry a doctor or lawyer, and live happily ever after. I don't know who first gave me these hints, but I guess I 'got the message' because I went to college, met and fell in love with Philip, who was smarter than I and a professional man. He was my 'dream man' and I surely tried to do everything I could so we would live happily ever after."

Philip and Barbara married immediately after their graduation. Barbara got a job teaching while Philip started law school and worked for an accounting firm. He had his CPA and a well planned set of career goals. After passing the bar exam, Philip joined a Big Eight accounting firm and started moving up in management rapidly.

Philip was sent to a number of overseas locations to obtain foreign financial training and Barbara quit her teaching job to go with him. They remained on the road for some time. Their first son was born in Beirut and their second in London on Barbara's 27th birthday. During the next 23 years, the family moved every 3 or 4 years because of Philip's work. Philip continued to receive promotions and important responsibilities within the firm.

By the time Barbara was fifty years old, the family had lived in eight cities on three continents. They had a vast correspondence with friends all

over the world. Barbara and Philip moved back to the United States just 2 years ago. Jeffrey, their oldest son, lives in California with his wife and daughter. Michael is working in Houston.

Throughout the periods of constant moving, Barbara wanted very much to be a good wife and mother. She felt this was an appropriate goal for her. "My mother encouraged me not to make waves. When I thought Philip should spend more time with me, my mother told me to work harder at helping him have the time to spend." So Barbara supervised every move, arranged for all services, checked out schools and doctors for the boys and everything Philip told her to do plus anything she could think of to release him from some of the responsibilities at home while he was busy building his career. Barbara would repeat the cycle at each new location. However, Philip still didn't spend any more time with her or with the boys.

Every once in a while Barbara asked Philip to spend more time at home with her and with the boys who were growing so fast that they might be out on their own before Philip really got to know them. She recalls, "He told me that he was earning a good living and I had to take care of myself and the boys. They were my responsibility, not his. I always thought that when you married someone, he should take care of the family - not just monetarily. Besides, I could never do anything right, that is, not right enough for Philip to say I'd done a good job." Once Barbara talked to her mother about her feelings that "something's wrong," although she couldn't be specific because she didn't know exactly what was wrong. "My mother called me selfish. She didn't understand how I could be unhappy when I had such nice things."

Barbara did have things - lovely homes, attractive clothes, expensive cars and jewelry and money.

Her lifestyle included glamorous entertaining and she knew many important people. However, as time went on she also felt less and less sure of her own abilities. She says, "I used to do a lot of charity work. The corporation expected it of the wives. Once when I was in complete charge of a benefit Valentine Ball, I didn't think I'd done a good job, even though we netted over $50,000, until Philip said it was 'OK.' I don't know why, but I thought then that maybe I was too dependent on him."

Philip rose in his company until he became a part of the top management team. The boys were soon off on their own. Barbara became more and more aware of the gap between Philip's self-confidence and her own. She says, "My husband was very successful in almost all areas of his life. I found that I was resentful of his ease at success. It made me feel even more of a failure. I felt so inadequate."

One day Barbara read an article in the daily newspaper about "The Corporate Wife." "It was the feeling - I was anonymous. It didn't seem possible that I had come from a happy home life, had been a successful teacher, a contented wife and mother and become anonymous. For perhaps the first time in my life, I felt myself really getting very angry."

Philip died of a massive coronary with little warning while at the office. Barbara handled all the funeral arrangements exhibiting little public emotion. The dust settled, her sons went back to their separate homes. The family friends returned to their home cities and countries. Occasionally a neighbor called or dropped in for a visit but, for the most part, she was alone.

Barbara continues, "Perhaps the most devastating

thing for me to realize was that I felt guilty about Philip's death because it was an opportunity to live my own life. It was my chance to stop being 'the corporate wife.' I know it's not right to look at Philip's death as being beneficial to me but in many ways it was. I still don't know what to do with these mixed-up feelings.

"It's taken me almost a year to recognize the fear of planning for myself and the guilt over Philip's death. Even now I'm not really sure I've made it. However, I have made some new friends on my own and I think that's a start but I feel so shaky inside. Now I want to find a way to make life meaningful again for myself. I guess I must make some plans about what to do with the rest of my life. And I don't know how to do that yet."

CLARICE

Clarice is a 47 year old, attractive fair-skinned black woman. At first glance, she appears retiring and demure in her behavior. Yet, often as she talks, her manner changes and she becomes very verbal and assertive, particularly when she begins to discuss her goals or what someone has done to her.

For the past year, Clarice has been an assistant to the Dean at a city college. Although her primary responsibility is supervising personnel and contracts for the Dean, she finds herself being the person on whom all the busy work gets dumped. The staff in the office includes another assistant in charge of the budgets, and an Associate Dean for academic advisement and student records. When she first started in this position she had different expectations. "I thought I would have more responsibility." However, in general, she enjoys her job because "it has given me a chance to learn a lot."

For the last six months, Clarice has been experiencing some difficulty with her co-workers both of whom are younger than she. "They make me feel stupid. Whenever I make suggestions, they criticize or ignore them. Yet, I know that they have taken these same ideas to the Dean later and presented them as their own. If I sit back, they ignore me; if I speak up, they resent it."

Last week, the other assistant to the Dean, a white man, was given supervisory authority over her for budgetary matters. "He hasn't even finished his M.B.A. yet. I feel misused and I am beginning to wonder if the problem is really the job or me. Some days I even doubt my ability to cope - not only with them, but things in general and

that's an unusual feeling for me."

As far back as she can remember, Clarice has always wanted to be in a position of power and respect. She describes herself as ambitious and upwardly mobile, and states, "I don't apologize for wanting to be that way." She remembers her childhood as a time of hardship mixed with good times. Clarice's father did odd jobs around the neighborhood and was often out of work. "I was ashamed of him because he did not seem to want to better his condition. However, I knew that one day I would do better."

Her mother was the dominant figure in the family and Clarice respected her for being stern and demanding. "When I was a teenager, I caught hell for breaking curfew and this led me to believe that she did not trust me." On the other hand, she believes that both her mother and father felt that she was a "smart girl and would go far. I always enjoyed learning and questioned everything." Her grades were good at the all-Black parochial school she attended financed by an aunt. She was awarded a scholarship to attend college and graduated in three years with a major in business administration.

Clarice is somewhat scornful of her father who "called me his little girl" and treated me like a queen one day but forgot about me the next. "However, I always knew that I was prettier than my younger sister and if I really wanted something, I could sweet talk him into doing it for me." As Clarice became more aware of her attractiveness during her teen years, she found herself "using my looks to get by without having to try too hard. People seem to make it easier for pretty girls."

It was during her first year in college that she tried using her femininity on an attractive male

instructor. He gave her a good grade which she really didn't deserve because, "I acted like a 'dumb blonde' and he was convinced I needed special help." This approach didn't work with others and she was even embarassed about trying it in the first place. "I decided to buckle down and do the work which I knew I could do."

It was during this period that she first began to realize what the terms racism and sexism really meant. As she put it, "Some of my professors felt that Blacks were stupid and females had no place in the business world." Until college, Clarice had never really encountered direct prejudice. In fact, even though her father emphasized that "I had to be better because I was Black, I felt that basically people's problems were due to their own internal faults and not related to their color or sex." Clarice recalls, "We were poor, but we didn't have all of those negative experiences you keep reading about and we always spoke standard English."

Clarice describes her early experiences with men as exploitative and disillusioning. When she was seventeen, she dated an older man of twenty-seven who expected her to cook for him and clean his apartment. "I felt I was being used." Her first sexual experience occurred during her freshman year in college with Ted, a fraternity man. "He got me drunk one night and then seduced me." She relates another experience which further demonstrated to her that, "You really can't depend on men." She has felt that way at times during her marriage. At the birth of her second child, Clarice had to get to the hospital on her own. Her husband was not at home when her labor pains began and her own doctor was out of town. She states that she had strong feelings of resentment toward both men, although she "managed to do it by myself."

It was during her sophomore year in college that she met her husband, Stan. He was a senior and lived out of state. Clarice decided to speed up her studies and graduate early so that she could get married and join him. Stan is now a high school history teacher. They have two children, a daughter, age 23 and a son, age 17. Although Stan has been supportive of whatever she has wanted to do, including working, she "regrets never really experiencing being single."

Clarice has worked in business during most of her married life. Prior to her current job, she was a supervisor at an insurance company, a position she held for 5 years. During that time, she completed a master's degree in business. Several reasons influenced her decision to resign from the insurance company. First of all, she felt she was paid less because she was a woman. Secondly, there were no women at the level of division manager and, as she puts it, "I did the work of a manager but the men got all the credit." She decided that her ultimate goal was to be a university administrator so she "could be properly recognized for my ability and production capabilities." However, she fears that her current feelings about herself and her job are reminiscent of those at the insurance company.

DOLORES

Dolores is angry at the whole world. She states, "Life is unfair. You must accept injustice as a way of life, but still try to maintain hope for future change. Why should I kill myself getting a degree? Maybe I should stop caring about helping my people. What's the use? I don't understand what's happening to me."

Dolores is 35 and reports being filled with many feelings - anger, confusion, desperation, and fears of failing and for her own emotional stability.

Dolores was born into a Mexican-American family, one of eight children. Following the divorce of her parents when she was ten, Dolores was sent to live with an aunt in Texas. Her anger toward her father and mother was overwhelming, but she also remembers a terrible sense of sadness. "It was such a big world...so hard to reach across...so far away."

Dolores subsequently channelled her energy into her school work. She remembers trying to grow up quickly and wanting desperately to be a strong person who did not need anyone's assistance. She recalls striving "to always do the very best I could do."

Four years later Dolores' older brother brought her to Chicago to live with her mother who had re-married. The reunion was a time of mixed feelings for Dolores. "I thought I would be so happy to see her but, "my mother and I were like strangers. I just clung to my brother's side."

Dolores remembers being envious of her brothers' and her sisters' closeness to one another, their shared experiences and their comparative affluence.

Dolores knew she could get little help or attention from her mother, beyond some new clothes, since her stepfather made it clear that he believed she was old enough to begin taking care of herself. "I knew I had to do things for myself."

A few months later, while staying overnight at a girlfriend's house, Dolores was raped. She remembers a man coming into her room and knocking her out. When she came to, she "felt different." She was very frightened and was afraid to tell anyone. "My mother was not available to me." Later, after being questioned by her brother, her teacher and a doctor, she realized she was pregnant. Bewildered and confused, she told herself, "The world is rotten and unjust."

Because of the pregnancy, the principal of her elementary school kept her from attending graduation ceremonies and her classmates and neighbors "... made me feel ugly. Even my brother blamed me for what happened." During the pregnancy, questions went round and round in Dolores' head. "What would become of me? Who would take care of me?" However, throughout the turmoil, Dolores clung to one decision...that she would keep her baby. The baby would ensure that she would always have someone to love and would always be loved by someone. Dolores did keep her daughter but explains, "I gave up my youth."

When Dolores was 17, she married a Puerto Rican man whose family disapproved of her "American ways." They condemned her for being too verbal, rebellious and independent. His family made remarks about her being too involved in parish activities.

As time passed, her husband seemed to agree with his family's opinions of Dolores. He critized her clothing, ideas and behavior. He humiliated her in front of his friends. He ridiculed her Spanish,

rejected her daughter and discounted her dreams of education and progress. About this time, Dolores discovered she was pregnant again and had an abortion. She remembers thinking, "No number two child for me. The world was still rotten."

One day her husband left home and never returned. She soon discovered that she was glad that he was gone. Eventually, she divorced him and concluded "...that the family thing does not exist. There is no such thing as a close family. Bravo for one who makes it and bravo for one who doesn't."

Through Dolores' volunteer work in parish affairs, she became involved in community activities. Much to her surprise, she was offered a job in a Latino community program. Although she was insecure about her lack of education and training, she threw herself into the work and tried to learn everything she could from her co-workers and supervisors. There were frustrations, but there was also tremendous personal growth and the birth of her "Mexican pride."

This job marked the beginning of Dolores' intense involvement with minority issues in education, employment and health care services. During this time she also became familiar with interracial animosities. "Blacks and Latinos seemed to be in constant rivalry for the white scraps."

Dolores was attacked as a "troublemaker," accused of being narrow in her concerns as well as prejudiced against other groups. However, the attacks only made her more convinced that her cause was just and her role important. She felt a personal "resounding defeat" when an important bilingual education funding bill for which she had worked hard, was voted down. This defeat served to make her even more determined to keep trying. "Challenge...everyday, every breath is a challenge."

Dolores felt she had achieved real identification with her heritage and with the frustration, anger and demands of the struggling Latino community. She states, "We have no political representation. We have nothing to trade off. We <u>are</u> the trade-offs!"

Dolores met her second husband while working for the passage of the bilingual education bill. They knew each other for a year before getting married. She states, "I was more practical in my choice of a husband this time." This marriage was a turning point and Dolores began to live a full life. Her husband was kind and understanding with her daughter and gentle with her. "I learned that love and marriage can be based on mutual respect, and that happiness and sadness are natural parts of life."

Dolores eventually mustered up enough courage to return to school and complete her GED. She also gave birth to a baby boy, to everyone's delight.

Dolores was 32 when she enrolled in college. Her husband had encouraged her to apply. At first, she didn't believe she would be accepted by a college, but later she decided that more education would make a difference "...as to whether people would listen to your viewpoints." College became an exciting experience and Dolores realized "I was smart and things were no longer scary."

Dolores continued her involvement with Latino issues. She discovered a self-help center for pregnant teenagers was being started in her neighborhood. Dolores offered to help as a volunteer on this important project. In light of her own background, she felt her input could benefit the program. In addition, many of the people organizing the center had worked with her on the bilingual education bill a few years before.

Although Dolores participated in several planning meetings, she was rejected for a part-time position as a counselor in the center. "They're moving too slowly on the project. Our people are not ready to grow. They have no trust in their own. I have so much to give, but what's the use? I feel like everything's coming apart."

HELEN

The tension in Helen's life seems to increase daily. She feels overwhelmed and is fearful about her ability to sort things out and keep her life intact. "I've been struggling to manage, but it's all falling apart." When the principal of the local high school called to say that her son was being suspended for smoking marijuana, she realized that she and maybe the whole family needed help. Helen doesn't understand how the decisions she has made could have caused her life to fall apart in such a short time.

Helen is the only child of middle class parents, both of whom are still living in the home in which Helen grew up, -- a home filled with pleasant childhood memories. Her parents are healthy, quite active socially, participate in community affairs and love being grandparents.

Helen recalls, "While I was growing up, my parents made it clear that I was expected to do at least one thing better than they did - I was supposed to go to college. The only choice I felt I had in this matter was where I would attend - within reason, of course. When I met Bill, I had already completed my first year at State. Then, after my second year, when Bill and I decided to get married, you can't imagine how my folks tried to talk me out of it. They said, 'You'll always have something to fall back on, if you have your college education.' Actually, I suspected they were disappointed that I was marrying someone in the trades and not a professional. I guess they figured that if I had a college degree I could attract a 'better' type of man. Even at 20 I was sure Bill was my type and at 43, I'm still convinced he is."

Helen and Bill were married and during the initial years of marriage, Helen worked as a sales clerk to keep her occupied until she started her family. She enjoyed running a home, entertaining friends, her parents and Bill's mother. Helen and Bill developed a comfortable relationship and were pleased when Helen became pregnant. She quit her job before Bill Jr.'s birth and was happy as a full time mother and homemaker. "Nothing pleased me more than being married and being a mother. It was probably the strongest message I can remember. I probably had other abilities but it never occurred to me that they could be used to fill in some of my empty time. I wanted to be a wife and have babies."

Helen's wishes were filled by the subsequent births of Dale 3 years later and then Alice. At 28, Helen saw no reason to presume that life would not continue to be good to her.

Helen was as surprised as anyone could be to find that she was bored with homemaking once Alice started school. "I'd now spent 14 years being concerned with other people, my husband and my children. Now, they don't need me in quite the same way and I think I'd like to do some things for myself." Helen decided to go back to school and complete her college degree.

"It was delicious to have time just for me. I was neither wife nor mother while I was at school. I remember thinking, 'I'm going to be talking to adults again,' and wondering if I really remembered how. I didn't even know how much I had missed stimulating discussions. I didn't feel guilty at all about enjoying school. It was something that everyone approved of - Bill, my parents and even my children." In fact, the kids helped Helen by quizzing her before tests and Alice sharpened her pencils. Helen went back to school part time and

so there was no real disruption of the home services she generally provided. She completed her B.A. in three years and everyone came to her graduation.

Helen felt that some tension developed in her marriage after her graduation. Friends kept asking, "What will you do now that you have a degree?" "What kind of a career will you go into?" Bill demonstrated some discomfort with the idea of people thinking that Helen "had to work." She says, "I don't think Bill liked the idea that he might not be seen as the primary provider in our family. After all, that was his role in our marriage and he'd been doing a good job." In addition, Helen found that she was not sure whether she wanted a career. She recalls, "I'm not going to take a chance on ruining our life together by making a career or family choice." But, she had become accustomed to being busy outside her home and so she returned to the type of work she did before Bill Jr.'s birth and took a part time job as a retail sales clerk. She experienced no difficulty in combining her job and her commitments to her marriage and family.

Helen soon missed the intellectual stimulation of college, so she took a course in Real Estate through the local community college. She became fascinated with real estate and decided to pursue a seller's license and then a broker's license, although she still continued her part time sales employment.

Helen's 40th birthday was marked by sadness. Bill's widowed mother became prematurely senile and Bill and Helen placed her in a nursing home. Several months after that decision it became apparent that the additional burden of paying for his mother's care was draining the family's financial reserves. Bill Jr. was in his first year of

college and Dale had only two more years of high school before he would begin college.

Helen decided to increase her part time sales position to a full time one. Sometimes she had to work on Saturdays and this meant she could not get the house ready for entertaining Saturday night, or could not attend all of Dale's football games. However, she still managed to get most of her chores done, and the family was not terribly upset by the few inconveniences.

However, as time went on and medical bills increased, Helen decided that her fascination with the real estate field might well be the solution. She contacted the largest agency in town and was hired on the basis of her training, sales experience and the fact that the real estate market was booming. Helen says, "Thank God I had marketable skills and kept in touch with people in the business."

Helen is now earning good commissions and enjoying the challenge and excitement of real estate. Helen feels she has chosen a career for herself even though the choice came as a result of a special financial need. "I love working in real estate even though it frequently means evenings and weekends."

"I try to hang on to those good feelings because it has upset some things at home. There was no way I could still be responsible for everything at home. I couldn't keep up with it. The family was frustrated. I felt I had no time for me. I was fulfilling everyone else's need the best way I could and still no one was happy with me any more. I feel pulled apart."

Dale and Alice argue a lot, particularly when she is away from home. Bill is called upon to act as

the peacemaker because he can usually be reached by telephone while Helen is often out on calls. In addition to smoking pot on school grounds, Dale is not doing well and may be on academic probation next year. Alice is 12 and starting to mature physically. She doesn't want to ask her father about "those things." Bill is quieter than he has ever been. Instead of having a beer or two while watching a ball game on a Sunday afternoon, he does laundry or is angry at Dale and Alice because they are not doing chores. Even her parents seem to have changed. They make remarks like, "If you'd finished college when you started instead of later, you might have married a professional man and you wouldn't have to be working so hard now." Helen says, "I can't believe it's all happening. How could so many reasonable decisions make my life fall apart?"

JUANITA

Three months ago, Juanita and her husband celebrated their 32nd wedding anniversary. One week later, Manuel was dead. "It was Sunday. We went to church that morning. One moment he was there, the next he was gone. I couldn't believe it. I froze."

Juanita didn't show her grief. She tried not to feel anything at first but now, "I am thawing out. I keep looking for my husband. I want to scream all the time. How can I go on?" Januita's strong religious faith, which helped her before through the death of her son and her father, is not enough to make up for the overwhelming sense of loss she feels now.

Juanita was born in Texas. Her father migrated with the picking seasons but in the winter came home to be with his family for a few months. Her family, relatives, friends and neighbors spoke only Spanish.

Juanita was 8 years old and spoke almost no English when she entered school, a school with only English-speaking teachers. She was excited, nervous, yet confident, looking forward to this new opportunity.

The first time the teacher called on her, she couldn't answer in English and the teacher said she was dumb. Juanita was hurt and angry but she was also determined to prove the teacher wrong. "Numbers are a universal language," she remembers thinking. "I'll show her I'm smart. When the class was given math problems, I solved them, checked them and usually was the first one finished."

During the summer when Juanita was 10 years old, she says "My father took me cotton picking. He was a wise man and wanted to give us a lesson in being an educated person and being an unskilled person. I remember that I felt excited. I wore jeans and a scarf for my head. But then there was the hot sun, the bending down for hours, and the snakes and the bugs."

There were other things that she remembers from that time. Her family lived in a barn, sleeping on the floor in the middle of it with a parent on each end to protect the children. Her mother had to cook outside. There was an outhouse for seventeen families. "I felt ashamed. At home we were poor, but clean. Here there wasn't even water to be clean. I hated it. I hated something else; I saw the different way the Anglos were treated - not like animals."

During another summer when Juanita was on her first trip to Mexico, back to the ancestral village, the family car was struck from the back by a truck driver without a license. The car was demolished and one cousin was killed. The police were hostile and said they had caused the accident. Juanita felt helpless and confused. "Only the people who came from the hills carrying blankets and bandages showed any kindness."

Juanita's anger at injustice was reinforced by a later confrontation with her 8th grade teacher. "What do you want to do in life and what do you plan to study in high school to obtain your goal?" Each student was asked, and when her turn came, Juanita said "My uncle told me to take Algebra and German so I can go to college." The teacher insisted Juanita ought to train for an office job so she could help support her family. Juanita refused to change her answer and felt the teacher never forgave her. This experience taught Juanita an im-

portant lesson about Anglos. "They don't encourage non-Anglos to live up to their potential, but rather to settle for something safe."

During high school, Juanita met the woman who had the most influence on her future, her Home Economics teacher. She explains, "This teacher encouraged me to improve my English, helped me move from barely passing to being an 'A' student, and showed me that somewhere there is always someone who will help and care."

When she was 21 years old, Juanita married Manuel, her high school sweetheart. Her mother had always said that marriage wasn't a one way street. She and Manuel learned to talk things out, to be considerate of each other and to be mutually supportive. Their happiness was completed with the birth of two sons and finally a daughter. As they shared jobs, illnesses and crises, their love and respect for each other grew.

Their strong relationship got them through the death of their eldest son when he was 8 years old. Juanita is stone-faced as she says she can't remember much of that terrible time. "It's too painful to recall." Only her strong religious faith and her husband's support kept her going.

When Juanita was 38 her father became ill with cancer. Her mother was not well either so Juanita cared for her father for 10 months until his death. "He was my best friend. I went to church and prayed and my priest comforted me. Although I missed his patience and kindness terribly, my father's death matured me."

Juanita's two children were in high school when their grandfather died. Shortly thereafter, she began taking college courses on a part time basis. It was difficult at first since it had been some

time since she had done so much reading, but she remembers, "I was learning and the world was a place of challenge. It was like opening another page. My children were doing fine. They liked me and I liked them. I tried not to put obstacles in their path, the 'old Latino ways' I was raised with. I felt like a butterfly. I was opening my wings. It was my turn."

After obtaining an A.A. degree, Juanita found a job as a teacher aide in the elementary school her children had attended. She continued working there for several years.

About three years ago, Juanita's daughter, Sylvia, set up a small office preparing tax returns. Sylvia had more business than she could handle alone and asked her mother to help out during peak periods. "It was such fun," Juanita says. "I remembered how much I loved math when I was a girl - making everything come out right - and I always wanted to help people."

In the weeks since Manuel's funeral, one of his sisters has been staying with Juanita, but now she is preparing to return to Texas. "I've always had faith and always worked hard to do the right thing, but Manuel was always there beside me. How could God let this happen?"

NAOMI

Naomi has just been released from the hospital after treatment for a stroke. She is divorced and eager to return to work. However, she has been told by the manager at the bank where she works that maybe she should find a job with less pressure and responsibility. She is enraged with her boss and is coming to doubt her ability to face the future.

In the past, Naomi felt that whatever she tried would come out right. "I was sure of myself." Success in whatever she attempted was taken for granted. Even as a child with her first lemonade stand, "I made more money than any other kid on the block." Naomi makes it her business to be open and friendly to most people. She is known as a good employee who can be trusted to work on her own.

Naomi and her older sister, Ruth, grew up in a home with warmth and love, but not much money. There were disagreements and arguments, but somehow things usually came out equitably. Hers was a family that tended to do things together, including going to church. Their parents encouraged both girls to achieve in school so they stood a better chance of getting a scholarship to college. At the same time, both girls also found jobs after school to provide themselves with spending money.

Naomi's first real job, after paper routes and babysitting, was the result of some high school bookkeeping courses. Her instructor recommended her to a small, local business looking for a part-time bookkeeper. Since Ruth was already in college and there was little money to spare, Naomi decided to delay her college education.

For the next year, Naomi stuck to earning rather than learning, but soon she began taking some night classes at a local community college. "I wanted to improve my life through education." Naomi's life was well-balanced between her parents, home, work, classes, and the several young men she saw socially. Then, several things happened at once.

Ruth graduated from college. Naomi felt she had to decide whether to stop working and start going to college full time. The company hired a new salesman, Marvin, and in a very short time, the decision was not college or work, but college or Marvin. At 22, Naomi decided to get married. "I always knew I'd get married and thought I'd be a mother." Surprisingly enough, Ruth followed suit 8 months later, although she and her husband moved to another state after their marriage.

Naomi continued to work full time after marriage. She viewed this as a temporary arrangement until she started to have children. After some months without getting pregnant, Naomi decided to continue her night school classes since Marvin was often away from home on business. Naomi completed her A.A. degree, and, still not pregnant, started on a bachelor's degree in business administration. During that time she was working, going to college and trying to get pregnant. "I was really burning the candle at both ends."

Naomi's parents, relieved of the financial burden of the education and care of their daughters, began spending more time together and money on themselves. During their first major vacation, when Naomi was 26, they were both killed in a hotel fire.

A year later, Naomi began experiencing symptoms of hypertension. Her doctor suggested several

changes to alleviate the stress he believed was the primary agent - one of which was that she avoid pregnancy since the risk of complications would be great. He also insisted that she give up either work or school.

Naomi had difficulty accepting the fact that she was not in perfect health. "I denied it - fought against the idea constantly. I was angry that it happened to me." She realized however, that she had no choice but to follow the doctor's suggestion and, as her husband was earning enough to support them comfortably, she decided to quit working and complete her B.A. degree as a full time student.

Naomi enjoyed the idea of going to school. "This was the first time in 10 years that I didn't have the responsibility of working. I couldn't wait to start my classes...it had taken me ten years to get to this point. I'd have the freedom to study and have intellectual discussions with other students. I'd have some of the fun that Ruth used to write about when she was away at school."

The intellectual discussions Naomi looked forward to didn't take place easily between 17 and 18 year olds and someone with 10 years of experience in the world of work. Naomi was midway between the traditional age students and the women returning to school after years as homemakers. However, she did meet a few women in a group for re-entry women sponsored by the college. "At first, I wasn't sure I personally related to the group, but soon realized I did. Women have a lot to gain from each other. I knew for the first time how important relationships with women are. Also, there weren't many women students in business administration - most were Liberal Arts majors - and having the group really helped me feel at ease."

Marvin showed little interest in her academic progress. His education beyond high school consisted

of a few courses taken while in the Navy. Naomi found herself unable to talk to Marvin about her changing ideas and feelings about herself as a woman. "I couldn't get him to understand. I couldn't find the right words to express myself."

Although she completed her degree, these years were disillusioning for Naomi. Her symptoms of hypertension continued and Marvin began coming home later and later, using her illness as an excuse to go out more by himself.

At 29, Naomi discovered that Marvin had been having an affair with a woman in his office for the past two years. The other woman was pregnant and Marvin asked for a divorce and said he wanted to be the father of a legitimate child. She accepted his request and, almost before she could absorb what was happening to her, Naomi found herself single again, without a job or much money, living in a small apartment, with her degree and hypertension.

Naomi's financial problems were the most pressing, so she began looking for a job. The only place where she was known was the company where her ex-husband and his new wife still worked. Rather than apply there, Naomi decided to settle for whatever job she could get...a bank teller. "It's like starting all over again, only this time, I'm so tired to begin with."

After some time at the bank she says, "I felt very angry. I was angry at the ease with which my husband moved out of my life. I was scared about the world and not sure how I fit in. I mourned a part of me that I valued. I was sad at dreams and promises unfulfilled."

Naomi buried her dreams and concentrated on being a good employee. Her contributions to the bank

were recognized and she moved quickly into a more responsible position as supervisor of the loan department. As soon as her financial concerns were under control, Naomi believed that her hypertension would diminish. Instead, after "working my tail off," she suffered a small stroke and was hospitalized.

PEGGY

Peggy recently had an affair with a widower, Don, transferred by his company into the community. She had been doing volunteer work for her church providing special welcoming services to potential church members newly arrived in the community, because her doctor recommended that she add some outside-the-home activities to her life as a way of coping with the pain of her frequent headaches. At first she resented the doctor's prescription because, "I was doing busyness not business. Volunteers have no status."

However her feelings began to change when she had a somewhat upsetting conversation with Don. "Somewhere in the middle of that first conversation, I suddenly realized that Don wasn't just hearing me, he was really listening to me and liking what he heard and saw and making me know that he liked those things. I was absolutely struck by feelings of being a woman, like by lightening, just because someone, a man, was paying attention to me. I was excited, I didn't know what to do, my hands began to sweat, I felt just like a little kid."

Peggy saw Don several times after their initial meeting, each time feeling more attracted to him. "I began wishing I could have an affair but kept pushing the feelings back. I couldn't do that. I had to do what society expected of me. What would the consequences be?" Don wore down Peggy's fears and they began an intimate, sexual relationship. She says, "Even though I was always afraid of being found out...getting caught...I knew that I'd never felt so good, so wanted, so completely feminine. I discovered my body and my feelings could go together. I could smell the flowers again. I was happy. Yet every time I came back home I

cried inside...why couldn't I feel this way with George...he was such a good person, he was my husband. I felt like I was on a seesaw and couldn't see how I'd get off, except to get caught and have my whole world break up around me. Sometimes I'd try to bargain with God...if He'd only let me get away without being found out, I'd be good again."

Peggy's fears of exposure took their toll. She lost weight, became very jumpy and felt guilty when she was with George; she snapped at the children and was too exhausted to do anything with them after school; she didn't want to visit with her parents any more. Everyone around her was aware that she was going through something. The quality of her life was going downhill rapidly. Peggy alternated between wondering why she felt so good with Don and why she felt so nasty with the members of her family. She realized that she would have to make a choice when Don was asked by his company if he would accept a position in another city. He asked Peggy to leave her family and go with him. Peggy thought it over and said no. She found that the subterfuge was eroding the good feelings she had, and that she could not face a divorce, so Don left the area, alone.

In talking about her past, Peggy calls herself the product of a happy home, the only child of warm, protective parents. Her mother was a homemaker, but worked part time at a home for the elderly; her father was a civil service employee of the federal government. There was a strong sense of family togetherness. They vacationed together, did sports together, laughed and cried together. "It was almost as if the family relationship was one of three adult friends (who have a lot of fun together) rather than parents and child."

Peggy was a good student in elementary and high school. She participated in a number of extra-

curricular activities, particularly the service oriented ones. She entered puberty somewhat later than most of her peers, as her mother had, and she felt a bit left out of the boy/girl processes. However, this didn't bother Peggy much because while many of her friends were beginning to date, she was still comfortable doing things with her parents. By her graduation from high school, it was clear that Peggy was growing into an attractive young woman.

Peggy's parents hoped she would go to college since they had saved for that. However, Peggy surprised them by deciding to get a job instead. She found a clerical position that was satisfying to her, paid well and, best of all, she continued to live at home. Her parents were pleased. Peggy remained at the job, with some raises in pay, for five years. She continued to be friendly with her high school classmates, palled around with a group of young women who had also decided to work instead of going to college and was a bridesmaid for several who married. She dated a little, but no one in particular. Peggy remembers, "I wanted marriage. I would imagine my wedding dress and the ceremony and the smell of the flowers and candles. But there was never a face on the man I married...he was like one of those dolls on the top of a wedding cake, sort of impersonal I guess."

At 23, Peggy met George, a new neighbor of one of her married friends. George was a mechanic at a local garage, one he had hoped to buy in a few years. Peggy and George began meeting each other often. Peggy's last single friend married and both George and Peggy were members of the wedding party. Soon George proposed and Peggy accepted. "I was feeling sad that there wouldn't be anyone else for me to pal around with. My folks were great, but they didn't always want to do the things I did. It was nice those past years to be

a part of my own crowd. George was, like, saving me from being the last one, the old maid. I never even considered saying no."

Peggy got pregnant almost at once. Because they were saving her salary toward the purchase of the garage, she worked until just before the baby was born. She was too busy and tired to do much planning or thinking. "I was terrified about having the baby, a fear of having a baby that wasn't right. It was so fast - the responsibilities. I was afraid I wouldn't be able to fulfill them. And George was so helpful, it made me guilty...he wanted the baby so much, because he was an orphan he wanted to be 'a family' so much. I've always been 'a family.'"

After Jeanine was born, Peggy felt depressed. "It suddenly hit me--I'm trapped! What have I done? I felt anxious and unhappy. I was angry that my life had changed so. George could go off to work - nothing had changed for him except that he got what he wanted. I was the one who was stuck! I was afraid to say that I didn't really like Jeanine. This was supposed to be a happy time. I should enjoy it. Something was wrong with me." Sixteen months later, Peggy was pregnant again.

A year or so after Brian's birth, Peggy developed moderately severe headaches. She says, "I played out roles as a wife and mother, did everything I could to please George and be good to the kids, because I was supposed to. But sometimes my head hurt so bad all I could do was lie down for a while and knock myself out."

George finally bought the garage and began spending more time there. Jeanine and Brian were growing up uneventfully, their necessities cared for at home, their outside fun provided by Nana and Grandad. Even when they were in school all day,

Peggy didn't see her old friends very much any more, although she was still close to her parents. During that time, her headaches got progressively more severe. When the headaches weren't bothering her, Peggy and her folks did things together if George was working. She says, "All during those years, I just tried to do the right thing. I don't think I ever really felt happy or good the way I had when I was a kid. I felt kind of isolated, that no one cared, that no one heard me."

Then Peggy met Don and her life began changing so quickly that she no longer knew what to do.

SARA

At 25, Sara feels out of the mainstream of life. She is afraid of being alone and yet, at the same time, finds it very difficult to make friends. She is depressed about being unable to establish or maintain a long term relationship, but she very much wants the traditional life of marriage and family. She is resentful of the total responsibility she has for herself, yet sees being independent as very important to her.

Sara grew up as the younger of two children and the only girl in a restrictive and non-demonstrative family. She coped by trying to do everything "right." This wasn't always easy because her father was the "...typical distant, hard-working provider," while her mother was the "...typical fussy, restless, consumer type concerned with traditional feminine values. 'I didn't want to incorporate that into my life; mother turned me off and I identified with father.'" Sara received little emotional support from either. Her father felt that "being an emotional woman is bad," while her mother used criticism rather than praise as the way to train Sara.

The message that there was a clear difference between Sara and her brother was always evident. For instance, career plans were not made for her. She says, "I can remember discussions about my brother's career. There was never this kind of discussion or concern about me and my future. I was expected to be good, to get good grades, to do the right thing. I was not as important since I was marking time until I married."

The marking time included going to college, where she completed a B.A. in psychology. No marriage prospects of a serious nature turned up during

college, but a recruiter for a large advertising agency did. Sara's academic record plus her lively intelligence, high energy level, active curiosity and pleasing ways, got her an excellent job offer which meant moving away from her home town to a large metropolitan area. Sara was not unhappy about leaving home, particularly since marriage was not on the horizon. Her 21st birthday and taking over financial responsibility for herself occurred within a few months of each other.

Sara made the geographic transition with minimum difficulty. She found herself pleased to be on her own, away from the criticizing of her mother and the coldness of her father. "I wanted to be somebody," she says. "And here was this important agency paying me a lot of money which made me feel important for maybe the first time in my life." Sara worked hard at what she did. That's what she got paid to do. Her talents and skills were valued by the agency, although there was little reinforcement for Sara's sense of self worth beyond salary increases.

Sara's transition in terms of relationships was a bit more difficult. Fortunately, there were opportunities to meet interesting people as her firm was a large one and she often saw people outside the firm on business. She developed a few friendships with women and dated a few men until she met David, a computer programmer. They saw one another for several months and Sara found other people less and less attractive. She says, "I believed that if David chose me, then I must be okay. I had him on a pedestal." Although David didn't offer marriage, he asked Sara to live with him and she accepted.

David and Sara lived together for a year and a half. Their relationship appeared to be a good one. They assumed somewhat traditional roles,

with David as the hard working provider while Sara added cooking and other household tasks to her work schedule. Sara invested much of her salary because David wished to be the primary source of support. In turn, she fussed over him, always seeking new ways to please him. They were a relatively stable unit in a community of mostly unmarried, upwardly mobile, career-oriented young people. Unfortunately, the relationship did not last.

Sara's attractive face hardens with emotion as she talks about the end of her relationship with David. "I was so naive. I really thought David and I were together for good, that marriage was the goal we were testing out by living together. When I got pregnant, I was scared, but I knew that everything would turn out okay because, of course, David and I would get married instead of just living together. David would take care of me. Well, that's not what happened. David didn't want the baby and, if that's what I wanted, then he didn't want me anymore. So I had an abortion. In the long run that didn't help either because David never stopped being angry at me for getting pregnant and left me anyway. I guess he didn't really want me after all."

Sara moved into a different apartment in the same area of the city and tried to put her life back together. It became necessary to reestablish herself as a single woman in the community where she was still seen as part of a couple. She spent much time alone and filled what time she could with busy work to stave off loneliness. Sara felt she was a failure as a woman.

The only real outlet for her energy was her job. Sara poured her efforts into it and her supervisors were impressed. She was offered a promotion which moved her out of the account representative area into the research field. She accepted the

promotion even though she had little knowledge of research, presuming that the company would provide some additional training.

Sara's presumption was inaccurate. The agency expected her to handle her new responsibilities in the research area without additional training. Sara's defenses were her intelligence, curiosity and energy...all used to keep one step ahead of her supervisor's expectations. She felt afraid and anxious that her lack of competence would be discovered. "I was not as competent as people around me thought I was."

For several months her work situation continued this way until Sara's fear of being found incompetent became a reality. She was fired when her supervisor discovered that a critical section of a report she drafted was not based upon current research data, but had been taken from a similar agency report of the previous year. At 24, Sara was without a meaningful relationship in her life, without a job, and with very few friendships. She again felt that she was a failure.

For the past year Sara has done some part-time work in order to keep herself occupied. The investments she made during the time she lived with David, plus unemployment, made it unnecessary for her to seek permanent employment immediately. Instead, she used her spare time to begin to consider other kinds of careers. Recently, she became interested in photography and took some courses at a local community college. She says, "I feel all at loose ends - like I don't belong anywhere." No relationships with men have developed since David. "Men making me feel okay about myself is still a big issue with me...I don't seem to have any in my life that do that."

TONI

Toni's mother, who adopted her when she was a baby, died a month ago of cancer. Toni had only discovered her mother's condition a few weeks earlier, but her death was a terrible shock. At her mother's funeral, Toni became overwhelmed with sadness and a feeling that she never really belonged. Since then, she has been questioning who she really is and where she came from.

Toni is trying to figure out "what direction my life is going to take." At 24, she's thinking about marriage and although Carl, her prospective husband, says he thinks that Black women should be educated and independent, she's not sure if he really means it. For some time, she has been considering entering social work which would mean returning to college and eventually going on to graduate school. As she says, "I have to figure out who I am and what is the best thing for me to do at this point in my life."

Although she had been working previously as a model, since her mother's death Toni has been employed in a lounge because she is between modeling jobs. She has been feeling very depressed because being a barmaid "is not my bag at all. I wanted to help people but not in this capacity." Carl, who is "ready to get married," is putting on the pressure, but Toni wants to do some planning. She says, "I am finally beginning to grow up. I've made some mistakes in the past but I've dealt with them. I don't want to take a chance of jeopardizing a new marriage, but I do want to find a career that will allow me to be important to myself and to others. I have to find something completely different that will offer me a future."

An only child, Toni views her family background as a rather protected one. Her parents adopted her because they were "getting on in age and my mother had been unable to have children." Neither parent had much formal education but as far as they were concerned, "It was to be my key to success." Her father had been a dining car chef but later decided to start his own small restaurant which is still doing fairly well. Her mother helped him in the restaurant. Financially, their circumstances were modest but comfortable.

Toni describes her father as a very important and positive force in her life. He didn't "treat me as a girl, that is, he never discouraged me from doing things I felt I could do. I felt special." As for her mother, Toni recalls that "she was a good woman but somehow I never felt as close to her as I did to my father. She was strict and demanded that I act like a lady, whatever else. My mother was hard working and capable and, in a way, I have qualities like her." Both of her parents taught her that she was as good as anyone else and "I believed them." She also remembers a woman friend of her mother who was "glamorous" and Toni relates that she always wanted to be like that woman.

When Toni was 16, she decided to escape the "cocoon" of her family. She had graduated early from high school and she felt that her mother was becoming too strict with her, "always wanting to know where I was going, what I was doing and with whom." She had met Frank at a friend's house and thought he was "exciting and grownup." He was "in love" with her and wanted her to marry him. She thought Frank would be a "traditional, good and loving husband." However, she knew that she would feel stifled because he would want her to stay at home and have children immediately. Toni felt that this would cause her to lose her free-

dom too soon even though the "idea of marriage was proving to be kind of fun." Frank "allowed me to be grown up and yet he was very restrictive."

During the summer after her high school graduation, Toni began to "chafe at the bit." She decided that she wanted to go to college feeling that "there must be more to life than just being a housewife." She selected a small Black college in the South because her parents had always wanted her to "be able to identify with my roots and to get a taste of Southern life." Frank agreed to let her go but wasn't happy about it.

She found college to be an easy and free life. For once, she didn't have to answer to anyone. She joined a sorority which placed much emphasis on "looking and acting right." Although she didn't feel that she fit their expectations exactly, she found that she was "quite happy with my sorority sisters."

During her junior year in college, Frank was killed in an accident while driving down to see her. The shock was devastating, but in a way "a release for me. I felt guilty about feeling that way because I felt responsible for his death." Toni completed the year, but did not graduate. That summer she learned to drive, to become more self-reliant and to begin to do things Frank had never wanted to do, such as traveling, and she enjoyed it immensely.

Toni found it difficult "settling down" and finding a "real job." For a couple of years she alternated between odd jobs which were not satisfying and not working at all. When a sorority sister suggested that she might like to try modeling, she jumped at the idea. Tall and with a slender build, Toni is not a beauty but she carries herself well. She has an air of chicness and as she says, "I kind of like being in the limelight."

In the past year or so, the glamour has begun to wear off. "It's really hard work; the other models are very competitive and the men think that you are nothing but an empty-headed doll." Her commitment to modeling as a career has drastically decreased. At one point, she refused to go to France for a special modeling job because "the guy I was dating didn't want me to." Now she feels that that was a mistake, because "I decided for the wrong reasons."

Toni has cultivated friendships with a number of women in a variety of professions. She describes them as "strong personalities" and feels that she is not "really like them because they are so motivated and know exactly where they are heading." She envies them their assurance. "Right now, I don't know where I'm going. I have to decide something about Carl and about my life."

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